



greater yellowlegs

Tringa melanoleuca

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Aves
Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae

Features

An adult greater yellowlegs is 13 to 15 inches long. Both sexes are similar in appearance. The gray body has black, gray, and white markings on its back. The rump and tail are white and the legs are bright yellow. The long, black bill is slightly curved up at the tip.

Natural History

The greater yellowlegs winters in the southern and southeastern United States south to the tip of South America. Breeding occurs in Canada and Alaska. It lives in marshes, in flooded fields, on mudflats, and around streams or ponds. This bird eats minnows, aquatic insects, snails, tadpoles, and berries. Its call is "whew-whew-whew" or "Dear!Dear!Dear!" Spring migrants arrive in Iowa in April. Nests are built usually near water by a branch or log. Four buff eggs marked with dark brown are laid. Fall migrants begin returning to Iowa in late July.

Habitats

constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; interior rivers and streams; temporary water supplies; natural lakes and prairie marshes

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

migrant: statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.